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SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR ERELI
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OIIP KMDR TC
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: EXECUTION OF SADDAM/RICE'S VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST/BUSH'S "LOSSES"

¶11. Summary: A UAE columnist in "Al-Khaleej" discussed the losses born by Bush: "Though pleased with Saddam's execution, Bush will be very disappointed when the American project in Iraq fails." "Al-Khaleej" front page described Rice's visit to Palestine as "a bribe" to get Arabs "to support the Iranian file" and "change the conflict from an Arab-Israeli to Arab-Iranian." A Qatari columnist in "Al-Ittihad" was sarcastic about those who considered Saddam a martyr -- the columnist considered Saddam's crimes against his people as "more heinous than the fact that he was hanged on a holy day." End Summary.

¶12. Under the headline "The Long American Night", a UAE columnist, Dr. Abdul Khaleq Abdulla, wrote a 1/10 op-ed published in the Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"Saddam was hanged, but Iraq's knot is now on the neck of President Bush. His problems and concerns increase every day as we begin the year 2007. The number of soldiers killed has exceeded more than 3,000 and the injured number more than 23,000. The cost of war is now at 500 billion dollars, which is a big burden on the budget, and not bearable, especially now that the Democrats in Congress are not in the mood to support Bush's adventures in Iraq... George Bush might be pleased because of the execution of Saddam Hussein but the President will be very disappointed when the American project in Iraq fails... All of a sudden, all of the options in Iraq are tough and painful, and all of the strategies are unrealistic. With a serious drop in his popularity, Bush lives the worst moments of his presidency... The biggest problem the U.S. faces right now is the arrogance of power and the absence of focus, in addition to having a stubborn President while the U.S. has to make difficult decisions in Iraq, and even more difficult decisions in Iran, and other more complicated decisions on other world crises... The world can not trust a clueless superpower and can not respect a President who does not know the ABCs. Respect for America is deteriorating worldwide, among their friends as well as their enemies... What's more important than the deterioration in respect is a diminishing fear of the U.S., as its defeat in Iraq becomes more visible every day."

¶13. The front page in Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) on 1/10 was headlined "Rice carries a Palestinian bribe to Arabs in exchange for their support for the Iranian nuclear file":

"As Bush announces a new strategy today, Rice carries a Palestinian

bribe to the Arabs in exchange for their anti-support to the Iranian file... U.S. President George Bush faces, as of today, internal confrontation as he announces a new strategy on Iraq, to convince the Americans that he learned from the lessons of the past and that he will start a new chapter, presenting Iraq as the last battle which the U.S. should win. He also starts a public relations campaign to change the conflict from Arab-Israeli to Arab-Iranian by creating an impression of his seriousness in solving the Palestinian case and by exaggerating the [seriousness] of the Iranian nuclear file... To do this, he will send his Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Kuwait. Rice will also attend the Paris 3 conference on Lebanon. It is unlikely that the new Secretary of Defense will accompany her. He might do a tour later. Among Rice's duties in the region is to explain Bush's new strategy on Iraq."

¶4. Under the headline "Saddam, a martyr??? Please don't insult our intelligence!" Qatari columnist Dr. Abdul-Hameed Al-Ansari wrote a 1/10 op-ed in Abu Dhabi-based Arabic semi-official daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"Saddam was the only Arab ruler -- and perhaps the last one -- to be executed. He is also the sole one who was executed on the day of joy to Muslims. Yet we must not forget that he was also an 'exceptional' Governor in many things, as he was the 'only' ruler who launched two wars of aggression, the only ruler who used chemical weapons against his people, the only ruler whose name has been linked to mass graves, the only ruler who killed imams and religious authorities, the 'only' ruler who caused the death of the largest number of innocent human beings, the only ruler who ruled his people with an iron fist for thirty years and killed his

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colleagues, the "only" one who breached the covenants which he signed, and lastly, the only one who hit the nerve to write the Quran with his absolute blood! The execution event was an exceptional event, but it was so because it was part of the exceptional element of the person executed. I do not know where the humiliation lies when people want to punish a person who had insulted them through his crimes against them and their neighbors? I don't understand how governments consider Saddam's execution as an 'insult and humiliation' to Arabs and Muslims! 'Insult' -- really -- is the steadfastness of tyranny which violates sanctities and dignities, tramples wealth, and controls capabilities. We have the right to ask: What happened to the Arab mind? Is it the shock of 'timing' that shook their heads and made them loose their entire wisdom? If Tariq Hamid said that the offense was the timing, then the conversion of 'Saddam' to a hero or martyr is the greatest crime!"

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